

TIPS FOR MANAGING DEPRESSION

Everyone feels sad or blue sometimes. The loss of someone close, a romantic breakup, family problems, or work setback are some of the events that can lead to feelings of sadness or grief.

Depression is different from a normal reaction to setbacks and disappointments. Depression lasts longer and is generally more pervasive than normal feelings of sadness.

Signs of Major Depression

A central feature of depression is feeling down or experiencing a loss of interest or pleasure in normally satisfying activities. When this is combined with the following signs, the person may be experiencing an episode of major depression.

- Feeling sad, hopeless, worthless and/or excessively guilty
- Significant weight loss when not dieting or weight gain OR decrease or increase in appetite
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering things, or making decisions
- Frequent thoughts of death or planning or attempting suicide

Other forms of depression include dysthymia, adjustment problems, and grief or bereavement.

What Can Be Done

Develop a social support network, people that you can confide in and rely on. Good self-care skills, including allowing time to relax, sleeping enough, exercising, eating properly, and limiting alcohol and caffeine intake, can also help.

Since depression and dysthymia can interfere with clear thinking, it is important to involve others. Don't try to deal with depression alone. Sometimes people hesitate to seek mental health treatment because they are afraid of social stigma, confidentiality, hopelessness, or because of a misunderstanding of the problem. Treatment can make a difference by reducing the length and severity of a depression. Sometimes, treatment for depression combines psychotherapy with antidepressant medication.

How We Can Help

Academic & Staff Assistance Program (ASAP) provides confidential counseling, consultation, and referral services to the UC Davis faculty and staff, and to immediate adult family members that live in the home. Whether the problem is work-related or personal, organizational or individual, career or relationship-focused ASAP can assist you in recognizing and resolving the problem. When additional resources are needed ASAP will connect you with appropriate services in your community.

Adapted from Student Health and Counseling Service at UC Davis